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ABSTRACT

Based on the idea that a wide range of individualization in the classroom is necessary to both stimulate the students and to meet their needs, this paper presents a complete course in English Literature based on the learning contract system. Included in the paper are a course outline with the objectives and the rules for the class; a title page for listing assignments; and assignment topics for the Anglo Saxon Age, Medieval Age, Elizabethan Age, Seventeenth Century, Eighteenth Century, Romantic Age, Victorian Age, and Modern Age. Three different formats are suggested in the paper. These formats provide a variety of activities to encourage creativity from the students and interaction with the teacher. The paper stresses that any format can be used for any of the major literary periods in English literature. (RS)

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# English Literature: A Contract Grading Approach

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Since students learn at various rates and in different styles, a wider range of individualization in the classroom is necessary to both stimulate the students and to meet their needs. One method of individualization is the learning contract.

This paper presents a complete course in English literature based on the learning contract system. It includes a course outline with the objectives and the rules for the class, a title page for listing assignments, and assignment topics for the Anglo Saxon Age, Medieval Age, Elizabethan Age, Seventeenth Century, Eighteenth Century, Romantic Age, Victorian Age, and Modern Age.

Three different formats are suggested. These formats provide a variety of activities to encourage creativity from the students and interaction with the teacher. Any format can be used for any of the major literary periods in English literature.

# English Literature

A. Objectives

The students should be able to:

1. Study independently.
2. Plan and organize assignments.
3. Utilize library materials.
4. Take notes from class lectures, the textbook, and audio-visual presentations.
5. Read and analyze literature from each era.
6. Define literary terms pertaining to each era.
7. Define vocabulary enrichment words from each era.
8. Write about literary, social, and historical topics of each era.
9. Discuss orally or in writing the universality of works from each era.
10. Discuss orally literary, social, and historical topics of each era.
11. Write examples of the literary styles and devices of each era.
12. Appreciate great works of literature.

B. Required Reading

1. Adventures in English Literature
2. Handouts

C. Supplemental Reading

1. Literary History of England
2. Handbook to Literature--Thrall, Hibberd, Holman

D. Required Projects

Students will be required to complete contracts on the following topics:

1. Anglo Saxon/Medieval Ages
2. Elizabethan Age/Macbeth
3. Seventeenth Century
4. Eighteenth Century
5. Romantic Age
6. Victorian Age
7. Modern Age

E. Supplemental Projects

Students may be asked to complete projects on additional topics pertaining to the literary eras being studied.

F. Examinations

There will be no tests for the first and second nine weeks. However, there will be a comprehensive semester test which will count twenty percent of the semester grade.

G. Methodology

Classes will be various combinations of independent study, lecture, audio-visual presentations, small group discussions, class discussions, and class activities.

H. Grading/Evaluation

1. The grading for English Literature will be based on the following scale:
   A 90-100 B 80-89 C 70-79 D 60-69 F Below 60
2. Each project is assigned a maximum of 100 points. Students must complete all required and supplemental projects each nine weeks.
3. All work submitted by students must be accurately completed. Any work not meeting expectations of the teacher will not be given full credit. Some graded projects or assignments may be redone for partial credit.
4. Any assignment, unless specifically noted otherwise, will lose five points (up to a maximum of thirty-five points) for each school day that it is late. Assignments are to be handed in at the beginning of class on the day that they are due or the first day that the student returns after being absent.
5. All make-up work must be completed, and it is the student's responsibility to turn in any uncompleted work by the end of the grading period, unless specifically noted otherwise.

I. Additional Information

1. Notes can be taken from the textbook, class lectures, and/or audio-visual presentations; notes should be comprehensive and in outline form.
2. A seminar is a small group discussion led by a teacher-moderator. Students will be asked subjective and objective questions about their contract work.
3. Daily attendance and participation are required.
4. Students are required to retain rough drafts or copies of all work completed during each grading period until the final grade is given.
5. Students are required to complete two title pages--one for them and one for the teacher--for each contract.
6. Students are required to use 8 1/2 by 11 inch paper with unfrayed edges, to write in blue or black ink or type, and to leave one inch left and right margins.
7. All definitions should be explanatory.
8. Some of the assignments may be altered by the instructor or by the student with the approval of the instructor.
9. Students should discuss with the teacher any problems which may occur in completing certain assignments or in meeting timelines.
10. Students should carefully review graded assignments to avoid repeating errors.
11. Students should avoid plagiarism ("copying or imitating the language, ideas, and thoughts of another author and passing off the same as one's original work") in their prose assignments.
12. Students should note number, title, and point value of each submision.
13. Class attendance is required.
14. Students should maintain a file of all graded assignments and handouts produced by or given to students during the semester.

English Literature Title Page

Name_____

Contracted Grade_____ Date Due_____

Assignment Title_____

Specific Assignments Chosen (Include Point Totals)

1.____ _____

2.____ _____

3.____ _____

4.____ _____

5.____ _____

6.____ _____

7.____ _____

_____ Point Totals

Objectives

_____

_____

_____

Attach a Bibliography

I agree to complete the above assignments to the best of my ability and to submit the completed assignments on the date (s) that they are due.

_____ _____

Student Signature Instructor Approval

Anglo Saxon/Medieval Ages

Directions: To receive a specific grade, add points (up to 100 maximum) that are attributed to the following assignments. Maximum creativity is allowed and suggested.

On the title page provided, write topics chosen (with point totals) and objectives considered in completing the contract work. Complete all assignments in Part I. Then select at least one topic from Part II and one from Part III. Acceptance of project will be determined by neatness, organization, style, and accuracy. Include your name on all assignments, and be prepared to discuss and display them in class.

Deadline for submission of completed contract material will be announced.

Part I: Complete the following required assignments.

5 Participate in a seminar related to the Anglo Saxon and Medieval Ages.

10 Participate in class activities.

15 Submit rewritten notes (assignment #3: three to five pages in length)

Part II: Select at least one of the following assignments.

20 Write a 150-200 word essay on the social/historical background of the age.

20 Answer questions in complete sentences after one of the authors in the book. (Be sure question is made clear with your answer).

20 Write an annotated bibliography of five books from or about the age (four points per annotation).

20 Write a one-two page biography of a major literary or historical figure of the age.

20 Define with part of speech twenty vocabulary enrichment words taken from the works read from this age (one point per definition).

20 Present an oral report or write an essay on the wars fought during the Anglo Saxon or Medieval Ages.

30 Define in complete sentences the following terms: epic, ballad, scop, thane, Wyrd, mead hall (five points each).

20 Draw a map of England and mark major invasion points and political boundaries of the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes.

20 Present an oral report or write an essay on the development of drama during the Medieval Age.

15 Diagram the English system of feudalism

___ Illustrate a story from the either the Anglo Saxon or the Medieval Age.

___ . . .

Part III: Select at least one of the following assignments.

25 Convert "The Seafarer" poem into a dialogue between the old sailor and the young man.

25 Retell the story of Beowulf in your own words.

20 Retell in your own words one of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales.

25 Add another episode to Morte d' Arthur.

25 Write five days of diary entries as one of the Crusaders. Date your entries.

25 Retell the story of Beowulf from Grendel's point of view.

-- . . .

Elizabethan Age

Directions: To receive a specific grade, add points (up to 100 maximum) that are attributed to the following assignments. Maximum creativity is allowed and suggested.

On a title page provided, write topics chosen (with point totals) and objectives considered in completing the contract work. Select at least one topic from Part II and one from Part III. Acceptance of projects will be determined by neatness, organization, style, and accuracy. Include your name on all assignments, and be prepared to discuss and display them in class.

Deadline for submision of completed contract material will be announced.

--Part I: Complete the following required assignments.

5 Participate in a seminar related to topics from the Elizabethan Age.

10 Participate in class activities.

15 Submit rewritten notes (assignment #3: three to five pages in length).

--Part II: Select at least one of the following assignments.

20 Write a 150-200 word essay on the social/historical background of the age.

20 Answer questions in complete sentences after one of the authors in the book. (Be sure question is made clear with your answer).

20 Write an annotated bibliography of five books from or about the age (four points per annotation).

20 Write a one-two page biography of a major literary or historical figure of the age.

20 Define with part of speech twenty vocabulary enrichment words taken from the works read from this age (one point per definition).

20 Draw a map of Scotland with settings from Macbeth.

25 Define in complete sentences up to five of the following terms: soliloquy, aside, pyramid organization, Spenserian stanza, sonnet, comic relief, masque, universality, miracle play, morality play, tragic flaw, catharsis, pastoral, lyric (five points per definition).

15 Diagram the interior of the Globe Theater.

— . . .

--Part III: Select at least one of the following assignments.

15 As a Scottish citizen, write a letter to a friend or your Congressman explaining the situation with Macbeth as king.

25 Write five days of diary entries as a major fictional or nonfictional character from the age.

15 Write a straight news story describing how the activities of Macbeth might be reported; include headlines and follow journalistic style.

35 Rewrite a Shakespearean play as a short story or contemporary drama; be sure to demonstrate knowledge of the short story or drama genre.

25 Retell the story of Macbeth from Macbeth's point of view.

15 Convert one of Shakespeare's sonnets to a prose narrative.

25 Discuss in an essay of 250 words or more one of the following topics: Reformation: Renaissance; pyramid organization of Macbeth; the tragic flaw of Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, or Duncan; comic relief in Macbeth; universality in Macbeth; violence in Macbeth; or themes of Macbeth.

25 Convert "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" and "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd" into a dialogue between the shepherd and his lady friend; be sure to demonstrate your awareness of the different points of view of each speaker.

20 Rewrite Francis Bacon's "Of Wisdom for a Man's Self" in a contemporary style while maintaining the basic theme of the essay.

20 Discuss the evolution of the Bible written in the vernacular.

___ . . .

Seventeenth Century

Directions: To receive a specific grade, add points (up to 100 maximum) that are attributed to the following assignments. Maximum creativity is allowed and suggested.

On a title page provided, write topics chosen (with point totals) and objectives considered in completing the contract work. Select at least one topic from Part II and one from Part III. Acceptance of projects will be determined by neatness, organization, style, and accuracy. Include your name on all assignments, and be prepared to discuss and display them in class.

Deadline for submision of completed contract material will be announced.

--Part I: Complete the following required assignments.

5 Participate in a seminar related to the 17th century.

10 Participate in class activities.

15 Submit rewritten notes (assignments #3; three to five pages in length).

10 Present a 3-5 minute oral report in which you retell the plot and/or theme of a short poem or essay from the age (assignment #4).

--Part II: Select at least one of the following assignments.

20 Write a 150-200 word essay on the social/historical background of the age.

20 Answer questions in complete sentences after one of the authors in the book. Be sure questions are made clear with your answer.

20 Write a one-two page biography of a major literary or historical figure of the age.

20 Define with part of speech twenty vocabulary enrichment taken from the works read from or about the age (one point per definition).

15 In a written report of 100-150 words discuss one of the following topics: the Great Plague of 1665, the Great Fire of 1666, or the Guy Fawkes gunpowder plot.

20 Write a biography of one of the Stuart monarchs.

20 Write a one-two page essay discussing the theater of the 17th century.

20 Interview any fictional or non-fictional character other than Samuel Pepys, and use the exact words from Pepys' diary to answer the questions; ask ten questions.

20 Define in complete sentences any four of the following terms: comedy of manners, metaphysical poetry, cavalier, Erastians, Puritanism, allegory, Restoration, divine right of kings, carpe diem (five points per definition).

___ Illustrate a poem or essay from the age.

___ . . .

--Part III: Select at least one of the following assignments.

25 Write five days of diary entries as one of the fictional or non-fictional characters from the age. Date your entries (five points per entry).

20 Discuss Oliver Cromwell and the religious and political upheaval which resulted in the Puritan Revolution.

25 As a Cavalier poet or as a lover of a Cavalier poet, write a letter to Dear Abby and ask for help to solve a problem suggested in one of the poems. Then provide the response. Demonstrate your knowledge of the life of the Cavalier poet, his poetry, and his philosophy. Sign your letter with a reference to a specific poet.

35 Convert Paradise Lost into a prose narrative, a play, or a short story. Be sure to demonstrate your knowledge of the genre selected.

20 Retell An Essay of Dramatic Poesy in contemporary prose style.

20 Add entries to Pepys' diary. Include references to the fire, plague, and/or his personal life. Be sure to follow Pepys' style in writing your version (five points per entry).

25 Write a poem or essay as a contemporary, female Cavalier. Demonstrate your knowledge of the Cavalier philosophy as well as the literary genre used.

___ . . .

Eighteenth Century

Directions: To receive a specific grade, add points (up to 100 maximum) that are attributed to the following assignments. Maximum creativity is allowed and suggested.

On a title page provided, write topics chosen (with point totals) and objectives considered in completing the contract work. Select at least one topic from Part II and one from Part III. Accpetance of projects will be determined by neatness, organization, style, and accuracy. Include your name on all assignments, and be prepared to discuss and display them in class.

Deadline for submission of completed contract material will be announced.

--Part I: Complete the following required assignments.

10 Participate in a seminar and present a one-two minute oral report on a literary work from the 18th century.

10 Participate in class activities.

15 Submit rewritten notes (assignment #3; three to five pages in length).

--Part II: Select at least one of the following assignments.

20 Write a 150-200 word essay on the social/historical background of the age.

20 Answer questions in complete sentences after one of the authors in the book. Be sure questions are made clear by your answers.

20 Write a one-two page biography of a major literary or historical figure of the age.

20 Define with part of speech twenty vocabulary enrichment words taken from the works read from or about the age (one point per definition).

20 Write a biography of one of the Hanover monarchs.

20 Interview someone other than Johnson or Boswell. Ask ten questions. Use exact excerpts from the works of Johnson or Boswell for your answers.

15 Define in complete sentences any five of the following terms: classicism, deism, satire, romanticism, sentimentalism, elegy, lexicographer, epigram, epic, prospectus (three points per definition).

25 Write a diary of one week's activities of a major fictional or non-fictional character from the age; include the dates of the entries.

___ Illustrate a poem or essay from the age.

___ . . .

--Part III: Select at least one of the following assignments.

20 Discuss the significance of the coffeehouses on 18th century writers in a 150-200 word essay.

20 Discuss the beginnings of the romantic movement in England at the end of the 18th century.

20 Discuss the rise of the periodical or novel during the 18th century.

25 Identify and discuss classical literature which influenced the 18th century writers.

25 Write your own essay in imitation of essays from The Spectator.

25 Write an original satire.

25 Discuss a fifth voyage of Gulliver in a two-three page satire.

35 Retell one of the following as a short story, play, or prose narrative: "The Rape of the Lock," "Elegy in a Country Churchyard," "The Deserted Village," or "Cotter's Saturday Night." Be sure to demonstrate your knowledge of the genre selected.

25 Write an essay titled "Journal of the Blizzard Year" or "Journal of the Tornado Year" in which you relate the events and your experience as if you were a student at your school during one of your area's natural disasters.

___ . . .

Romantic Age

Directions: To receive a specific grade, add points (up to 100 maximum) that are attributed to the following assignments. Maximum creativity is allowed and suggested.

On a title page provided, write topics chosen (with point totals) and objectives considered in completing the contract work. Select at least one topic from Part II and one from Part III. Accpetance of projects will be determined by neatness, organization, style, and accuracy. Include your name on all assignments, and be prepared to discuss and display them in class.

Deadline for submission of completed contract material will be announced.

--Part I: Complete the following required assignments.

10 Participate in a seminar and present a one-two minute oral report on a literary work from the Romantic Age.

10 Participate in class activities.

15 Submit rewritten notes (assignment #3: three to five pages in length).

--Part II: Select at least one of the following assignments.

20 Write a 150-200 word essay on the social/historical background of the age.

20 Answer questions in complete sentences after one of the authors in the book. Be sure questions are made clear by your answers.

20 Write a one-two page biography of a major literary or historical figure of the age.

20 Define with part of speech twenty vocabulary enrichment words taken from the works read from or about the age (one point per definition).

25 Write a diary of one week's activities of a major fictional or non-fictional character from the age; include the dates of the entries (five points per entry).

__ Illustrate a poem or essay from the age.

__ . . .

--Part III: Select at least one of the following assignments.

30 Write an original twenty line or longer poem with characteristics of romanticism.

20 Write an annotated bibliography of five books from or about the age (four points per annotation).

30 Retell "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" or "The Eve of St. Agnes" as a first person prose narrative, as a short story, or as a play. Demonstrate your knowledge of the poem and the writing style used.

25 Interview the prisoner of Chillon after he has been rescued, ask ten questions, and provide ten answers in your own words.

25 Describe the activities of a contemporary romantic.

25 Write a two-three page letter to your parents or friends explaining what you and one of the five romantics are doing.

25 Discuss in a 150-200 word essay the use of drugs by some of the romantic poets.

25 Write brief (one-half page) descriptions of five of the romantic poets; demonstrate your knowledge of phrases and clauses (five points per description).

20 Assemble an anthology of poems by romantic authors not represented in the textbook; add ten points for illustrations.

___ . . .

Victorian Age

Directions: To receive a specific grade, define terms, rewrite notes, and complete one assignment from each category. (For example, to receive a "C," you must submit rewritten notes, define terms, complete one assignment in the "D" category and one assignment in the "C" category). Maximum creativity is allowed and suggested.

On a title page provided, write topics chosen and objectives considered in completing the contract work. Acceptance of projects will be determined by neatness, organization, style, and accuracy. Include your name on all projects submitted, and be prepared to discuss and display projects.

Deadline for submission of completed contract material will be announced.

----Everyone must submit rewritten notes and define the following terms in complete sentences.

1. Pre-Raphaelites
2. Oxford Movement
3. dramatic monologue
4. Crimean War
5. The Communist Manifesto

D. 1. Give an oral report on a topic of the Victorian Age.
2. Make a collage on 8 1/2 by 11 inch unlined paper representing a scene from one of the short stories or poems of the age.
3. Make a bulletin board display on a person or work of the age.
4. Write a one-two page report on an author, event, or work of the age.
5. . . .

C. 1. Write a diary of one week's activities of a major fictional or non-fictional character of the age.
2. Write a 150-200 word essay on the life of Queen Victoria.
3. Make a scrapbook showing fashions, houses, or furniture from the age.
4. Prepare a bibliography of twenty books from or about the age.
5. . . .

B. 1. On tape interview one of the major fictional or non-fictional characters of the age. Include a script.
2. Draw a series of original cartoons describing political events of the day.
3. Put a picture on 8 1/2 by 11 inch unlined paper of a contemporary person or event with a quote from one of the poems or short stories.
4. Construct a cylinder collage of themes or events of a major work of the age. Include title and author of work.
5. . . .

A. 1. Write a three-five page term paper on a major work of the age.
2. Write a three-five page term paer on the Marx/Engels version of communism.
3. Participate in a panel discussion on communism with one person acting as a moderator, one as Marx, and one as Engels.
4. Write an annotated bibliography of five books from or about the age.
5. . . .

Modern Age

Directions: To receive a specific grade, add points (up to 100 maximum) that you attribute with the instructor's approval to the following projects. Maximum creativity is allowed and suggested.

On a title page provided, write topics chosen (with point totals) and objectives considered in completing the contract work. Acceptance of projects will be determined by neatness, organization, style, and accuracy. Include your name on all projects and be prepared to discuss and display them in class.

Deadline for submission of completed contract material will be announced.

____ Write a 150-200 word essay on the social/historical background of the age.

____ Construct a project of wood or metal suitable for use as a visual aid on the age.

____ Select and define terms directly related solely to the age.

____ Make a crossword puzzle of terms from the age. (Include the key).

____ Prepare and present an original game show which uses literary, social, and historical events from the age as the basis for questions and answers.

____ Compile an anthology of works of the age which are not in the textbook.

____ Write an obituary on one of the authors from the age.

____ Write an annotated bibliography of five books from or about the age.

____ Rewrite a work from the age by changing its literary genre (e. g., poem to play, short story to play, etc.)

____ Conduct an interview with anyone from the age (a political figure, movie star, athlete, etc.) and use the exact words from one of the works from the age for the answers.

____ As a literary critic, review one of the works from the age.

____ Identify and define for vocabulary enrichment any twenty words from the age.

____ Make a crossword puzzle of key words which would act as clues to identify a work or author from the age. (Include the key).

____ Participate in a seminar on the age, and be prepared to discuss the biography, major works, and the role of a significant author from the age.

____ Participate in a seminar as an observor. Take notes, ask questions, and be prepared to take a test on knowledge gained from the seminar.

____ In complete sentences, answer questions from the textbook after one of the authors from the age.

____ Design clothes and attire dolls in outfits worn by people from the age. (Include the patterns for the clothes, if possible).

____ Create a visual project of cloth on a work from the age.

____ Make a tape recording on an author, event, or work from the age. (Include the script).

____ Compile a bibliography of at least twenty books about the age.

____ Make a scrapbook on eight and a half by eleven inch unlined paper showing the transition of fashion, architecture, or major inventions from the age.

____ Write a three-five page term paper on a topic from the age.

____ Write an anthology of original works similar to those written during the age.

____ Construct a cylinder collage of themes or events of a major work of the age. (Include the title and author of the work or event).

____ Report major historical events of the age in either radio or television broadcasts. (Add points if pictures associated with history are incorporated into the telecast).

____ Adapt a play, novel, or short story into a radio play and put it on an audio tape. (Include a script).

____ Adapt a play, novel, or short story into a play and perform it for the class or put it on a video tape. (Include a script).

____ . . .